An

Essay

on conception.

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Amidst the fluctuations of medical science and during the disquisition of Physiological questions, much has been said with eagerness, and pertinacity on conception.

Numerous and diversified, however as have been the theories advanced on the subject, which bears date from the time of Pythagoras, many of them like other speculations of philosophers, are entitled to no further credit than that of ingenuity, and are now entombed with their advocates.

As however our art advanced in improvement, and became illuminated by the blaze of science, two sects arose, which divided the doctrines of conception into distinct classes, to one of which, all theories carrying with them, the probability of correctness, have been refered.

The first, and most antiquated of these doctrines, argues the preexistence of germs, and that

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these germs, created with the beginning of things, were scattered through the world, but ultimately meeting with appropiate genital organs effected a lodgment therein, and became fit for developement. This hypothesis however did not stand long before it was stripped of its primitive shape, and pruned of part of its absurdities, by its modern advocates; who alledged that these germs, did not rove about seeking a suitable site, for a habitation and home.

It was on the contrary by them supported that all of the same species were ab Initio neatly incased, one within another, so that the first parent animal, or vegetable, contained the germ of each succeeding generation, which to be evolved required only the seminal impulse of the male. Some other dissention has likewise existed amongst the advocates of Palengenesis, as to the, origin, existence, and developement of

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the germs; agreeing however in the fundamental principles of the hypothesis; they maintained, that the germs, as the exact miniature of the animal, or vegetable, to which it belongs, exist in the female prior to fecundation, requiring only the stimulus of the male semen to excite it into life.

Epigenesis on the contrary denies the preexistence of germs, and supposes the fluid contained in the ovarian vesicle, to be the unimpregnated, elementary matter of the foetus, which after impregnation, becomes organized, into an embryo, by the influence of the male semen.

It is under this division that I mean to comprehend, what I conceive at present, to be the most plausible Theory of conception.

Conception I shall define to be the impregnation of the ovum, by the stimulus of the male semen, exerted on the vagina, and through the medium of the rest of the genital organs, by sympathy

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transmitted to the ovaries.
That it may take place, requires,
1st That the female should have arrived at the age of puberty.
2nd That the genital organs, should have completely developed themselves.
3rd That she should have menstruated, or felt a disposition to do so.
4th Of all the operations, of the animal economy, that of generation requires, that the most perfect harmony, and unison, should exist in the uterine system. as any irregularity produces an incapacity to conception.
5th That an equal degree of excitement, should exist between the male & female.
6th That the semen be applied to the vagina, or uterus, cavity of the uterus, or all of them.
The two first of these propositions I take for conceded, as at present I do not know that the validity of them are questioned.

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Considerations of Rent.

I think it is a just, and reasonable conclusion of Dr. Haytton, that fecundation is performed by that law of the animal economy, called sympathy or consent of parts.
That the semen first stimulates the vagina os uteri, cavity of the uterus or all of them.
By sympathy, the ovarian vehicle enlarges, projects, and bursts.
By sympathy, the fallopian tubes, incline to the ovaries, and having embraced them, convey the rudiments of the foetus to the uterus.
By sympathy, the uterus makes the necessary preparations for perfecting, the formation, and growth of the foetus, and finally
By sympathy, the breast furnishes milk for its support after birth.
This appears to me to be the most plausible theory of conception, whether however it is erroneous or not, I do not see either the advantages or disadvantages which would result, in a practical point of view. Though it is impossible to say to what the discovery of any truth would lead, before it is discovered, yet it is happy for us, that those things which are beyond, the comprehension, or which elude the observation

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of men of plain understanding, are of the least importance in practice. Providence having ordained, that the honest and assiduous application of ordinary capacities, should render us equal to the exigencies of life, and the duties we owe to Society.